

THE GOVERNMENT's advertising campaign to put over its Housing Finance Bill has run into slight difficulties on ITV. This is not because, as you might think, the description of the Bill as a 'Fair Rents' Bill is a gross fraud under the Trade Descriptions Act, but that it is felt to carry a taint of party political propaganda, which would never do for ITV. The usual shoddy hypocritical British compromise has been arrived at, which one understands describes the Bill as the Fair Rents Housing Finance Bill. It is as if a food manufacturer advertised his product as Nourishing Poison Food Starvation Product.

What is a Fair Rent? Conservatives, who have devoted their political philosophy to the capitalist system understandably believe that a fair rent is as much as the market will bear. The Labour Party, with vague pretensions to Socialism and an actual loyalty to the capitalist system, believe it should be what the tenant can pay—and what is economically sound. Post-war oscillations between both types of Government have exposed the tenant to insecurity, to rising rents and the non-tenant to homelessness.

At the back of the Conservative mind is the concept of fairness to the landlord, who is always envisaged as a frail old lady living on the few pence she gets from controlled rents—why is it one always lives under the other kind? There is also the magic formula that the Conservatives have dreamed up that they are going to subsidize 'people not houses', hence the new Housing Finance Bill which will arrive at a mystic figure (by stages) of a fair rent. This will be imposed both upon private tenants and upon council tenants. (Upon the latter even if their housing authority has a financial surplus.)

For a party opposed to bureaucracy and welfare the Conservatives have gone to the extraordinary length of setting up a complex bureaucracy which will determine a fair rent and a second apparatus, which will make rebates to tenants. So that they can pay the increased rents! In this way they will subsidize the landlords!

The idealistic dream of the Con-

NO RENT IS FAIR RENT

servatives is for a property-owning democracy and they have never concealed their dislike for municipal housing. This Bill is aimed at wiping out the stain of subsidized housing by discouraging Councils from further expansion and by raising municipal housing to economic levels.

The textbook concept of an unsubsidized society is set at naught by the Conservative concessions to a property-owning democracy, by their furtherance of tax allowances for mortgages and their continuance of generous subsidies (initiated by a Labour Government) for improvement grants to convert a tatty little slum house into a *chic petite* townhouse. However these are subsidies to the right kind of people!

This constant pressure upon the source of houses, the creation of the two-house family, the bourgeoisification of working-class suburbs, the constant rise in municipal rents, the elimination of rented property, have all forced families willy-nilly either into homelessness, overcrowding or into buying property on a mortgage and participating in the rat race at a higher social level. The problem of housing is nothing new, Engels wrote about it in the nineteenth century (his solution was to take over the homes of the rich); it has nothing to do with immigration or emigration or what kind of government is in power.

Thirty years ago the government had a housing problem, thousands of people had to be housed in a hurry. The manpower of the building trade was mobilized and whole townships of accommodation were built, in many cases individual houses of a high standard. Where this was not considered mansions were expropriated and the homeless were allocated living space. The question of cost or of subsidies did not arise. There was a problem and it was solved by the quickest method. Thirty years later we still have the problem

of homelessness but lacking the urgency of a war-situation, for it was in wartime that we built townships for the services and billeted evacuees. We are not solving the problem and what is more we claim it is insoluble.

To give the Conservatives the credit of a devout belief in the ability of capitalism to solve the housing problem, this Bill is the purblind fumbblings of an idiot creed rather than the deliberate malice of a grasping gang of money-grubbers. That the money-grubbers will win out there is no possible doubt whatsoever. At the same time the Labour Party have shown no adherence to the least vestige of a Socialism which would solve the housing problem—which—forgive me Cathy!—is only a technical problem—given a determination to solve it which is conspicuously lacking in Governments of all stripes.

But what are we to do? On the rebound, as is usual with electors, Labour councils were elected in many towns and cities. When the details of this Tory Housing Finance Bill were revealed they were full of

fight and threatened to defy the central Tory government. It was, and is still, pointed out that the Tory government would levy a surcharge on councillors who refused to implement the orders to increase council rents; the Tory government also threatened to install a Housing Commissioner to administer the increases. (It is strange how by some dialectic, the anti-bureaucratic Tories set up multiplying bureaucracies.)

The *Sunday Telegraph* (17.9.72) quotes a Labour councillor as saying, 'We had the choice of breaking our election promises, breaking the law or resigning.' Also in the *Telegraph* is the report of the Council at Rugeley in Staffordshire which decided originally to oppose the Act, for they already had a surplus from rent payments (what's Socialist about that?). They decided, to avoid surcharges on individual councillors, to ask the Minister of the Environment to appoint a Housing Commissioner. This the Minister refused to do, and said that the Councillors would be liable. They also threatened other steps

against tenants at which the Council retreated.

The *Telegraph* reports council leader Mr. Terry Cowlishaw as saying, 'It was the bitterest day of my 20 years in local government service. We are still determined to show that the rent increases are being imposed by the Government and not by the local authority. We have a banner outside the local rent office saying it is not the wish of the local council, and our rent books will show the rent we approve of as well as the total.' Thank you very much!

The number of Labour Councils 'opposing' the act has dwindled from the original numbers, some have been 'bought' off by concessions of reduced increases from £1 to 75p and others by the process and reasoning of the Rugeley council. We find once again that the so-called Socialists have feet of clay. As with the Common Market and the Trades Disputes Acts, we find these staunch champions of the masses quibbling about 25p, or the interpretation of some clause or

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THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

ALTHOUGH THE VAST majority of building workers returned to work after the 'shabby settlement' with the employers, they did not feel that they had been defeated. Far from it, twelve weeks of struggle have changed the industry out of all recognition. As building workers were told, that by the very nature of the industry, strike action, on a large scale, was not only impossible but would also be ineffective. The contrary has been proved on both counts.

There is now a widespread feeling that the unions, or rather the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians, got the employers off the hook, because, after another two or three weeks, the bosses would have settled the full claim.

On Merseyside, Birmingham and Dundee, the strike continued for another week in protest against the settlement. Local union leaders were shouted down when they tried to get a resumption of work. But at later meetings they decided to return.

ON STRIKE AGAIN

However, disputes did reopen on the question of the 'lump'. At a GLC site in Marylebone, the 'lump' firm of O'Hara was removed from the job after another week of strike action. Operatives are hoping to get O'Hara withdrawn from all council sites. Another job in the area, Taylor Woodrows, had a similar success.

At the Cubitts World's End, Chelsea, Council housing site, the sub-contract bricklayer refused to pay the new increases. Cubitts also tried to transfer men off the site. By the afternoon the site was on strike again. They are trying to get the support from other Cubitt sites and force a victory over a company which has continually blacklisted and victimised shop stewards.

Birmingham workers on Bryant jobs are continuing their strike action to gain the £6 national award on top of their company agreement of £30 for a 40-hour week. This will mean that 23 sites will be idle. Some companies have cut bonus payments in order to recover the £6 settlement. Cementation is one of these and strike action is expected to force the firm to honour the settlement.

Although the settlement stopped a long way short of our demands, it is not seen as a defeat. The picket centres are still in existence and are trying to function. The Action Committees are likewise still meeting but unlike the centres, the influence of the full-time Regional Secretaries makes these Committees talking shops, rather than initiators of action. In fact, one of the criticisms made of the London Action Committee during the strike, was that it only met once a week, when it could have played a more decisive role. After all the Committees included rank and file militants as well as full-time officials.

PICKET CENTRE MEETINGS

If the important gains of twelve weeks of action are not to be lost, then it is vital that the picket centres remain. West London and Gower Street centres have already held meetings in order to continue the struggle against the 'lump', blacklisting and victimisation. The feeling at these meetings was that if the unionised sites assisted one another and organised the picketing of 'lump' jobs, we could take up the struggle where the settlement left off. It was also felt that the agreement should be turned over after its first year and a further increase and 35 hours demanded.

What is plain is that the strike has created a rank and file militant upsurge which will use its new-found strength in the coming months. Both the employers and the union leaders were aware

of this upsurge and therefore reached a settlement. As with other union leaders, the leadership of the building workers' unions are far removed from the day-to-day problems on site. The huge death and accident rate, the blacklisting and victimisation, that are part and parcel of the industry, only appear as figures and reports to the union leader. His is the life of an administrator, negotiator and a labour statesman. His roots may be working class but his life and ambitions are those of the middle class. Workers should not put their faith in union leaders, but should come together themselves to build effective organisations of the rank and file. The twelve-week strike has shown us what can be achieved by our own efforts, the opportunity to learn from it and build on that experience should not be lost.

P.T.

FRANCO'S FRIENDS

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS after the Russian Communist dictators and their sympathisers strangled the Spanish Revolution it now seems that they are set to further sabotage the continuing struggle against Franco's fascist regime.

A recently signed treaty provides for greatly increased trade between the two regimes. Negotiations are also under way for a civil aviation agreement which will allow the Russian state airline, Aeroflot, to fly a shorter route to Cuba and South America via Spain.

The Russian rulers see the potential of trade with Spain and are eager to secure closer links with the Spanish regime. However, Franco is believed to be insisting on the return of the Spanish gold reserves shipped to Russia by the Republican Government during the Civil War and assurances against the encouragement of Communist agitation against his rule.

How long will it be before this final betrayal of the Spanish working class?

T.P.

VALPREDA IS STILL IN PRISON

PIETRO VALPREDO, and three others, have now been nearly three years in prison. Accused of causing bomb explosions, as long ago as 1969, they still await trial, and the public seem entirely indifferent to this violation of what is supposed to be democratic justice in the free world, and all that. Furthermore, two Fascists have been arrested in Milan and charged with the bombing. Presumably the idea is to bring them all together, and charge them jointly, although the spectacle of anarchists and Fascists being tried side by side, as part of the same conspiracy, is a bit too much, even for the most bigoted authoritarians.

Valpreda is literally 'rotting in jail'. He is seriously ill with leukemia. Although he was arrested in Milan, he was brought to Rome for the pre-trial investigation, despite protests from his defence counsel that this was improper. The trial opened in February, but the court declared itself to be incompetent, and ordered that the hearings take place in Milan. This implying that the pre-trial investigation may have been irregular. The Milan public prosecutor

has asked the Court of Cassation to take the hearings away from Milan. And so round and round we go. Meanwhile the health of Valpreda and his comrades in misfortune continues to deteriorate. Perhaps the authorities hope that the problem of what to do with them will in time solve itself. In some ways Italy is still in the age of Mussolini—and operating on many of his laws!

Valpreda has now made an appeal to the Milan courts that he and his colleagues be either brought to trial or set free. Press reports do not strike an exactly optimistic note about his chances of achieving anything by this. Ultimately only public indignation can save him, and the popular mood (not only in Italy) seems to be one of cynical indifference.

A.W.U.

According to the latest report we have received, Valpreda has now been transferred to a hospital. The trial, if it ever takes place, is not to be in Milan but in some, as yet unidentified, town in the South of Italy. No reason has been given for this.

DEAR MR MOYSE, thank you for your letter of September 4, 1972. I agree with your opinion that Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's reputation now stands considerably higher than in 1952 when you previously suggested the commemoration of one of his London residences. However, on examining previous correspondence, I find that Gaudier-Brzeska's studio at 454a Fulham Road was in fact demolished prior to 1952. *Etc and oh etc*... the possibility of erecting a plaque at 29 Stenderale Road or Reburn Street will therefore be investigated, etc., etc., etc., yours faithfully, Miss E. D. Mercer, BA, FSA, Head Archivist for Director General the Greater London Council, September 7, 1972.

And all those long hours that one spent, twenty years ago, sifting through the old street records have in the end been justified, and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's short life within our Town shall, after twenty years, be so honoured.

For those who love the creative arts there is that moment in time when a single painting or a poem became the key to an empire of the intellect and of the heart, whose lifelong exploration shall cease only at death. A few lines of a poem by Wilde, a Beardsley drawing, a painting by poor dead Kit Wood, a single chord of music or the memory of an actor posing on a bare stage, and we can name the hour, the day and the year, even as the mystic claims his personal communication with God.

One remembers Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's carving of a gentle, resting fawn, or the beauty of his marbled *Laughing Torso*. In the late nineteen-thirties one stood, ill dressed and hopeless, lonely in the huge crowd around the platform of the Socialist Party of

A Declaration of Interests

Great Britain, and listened to Tony Turner rage at our corrupt society. This was our university and the lean and angry Tony Turner fed our starved souls with hope and our minds with a desire and an intent to examine and destroy our worthless world.

Then high upon his platform in the grey November air Tony Turner held aloft Nina Hammett's autobiographical *Laughing Torso* (as Nina, despite what the film says, posed for the torso, she had every right to use the title). Tony Turner cried, with the religious zeal of one of Cromwell's Ranters, that here was living printed proof of an evil and a degenerate society and one knew that Tony Turner had fulfilled his task in the furtherance of my education, for he had revealed the cage of his brilliant intellect.

NO SAVAGE MESSIAH

Gaudier-Brzeska was no savage messiah but a young and creative sculptor in the great European tradition. In clay his work possessed all the flowing immobility of Rodin's fingered clay, when flesh and dress cloaked the tortured bones, and in stone he accepted not only the discipline of the New Age but the traditions of the Craftsmen of Orleans, and in white marble he carved new harmonies, yea, even into his masterpiece *Laughing Torso*, whose young breasts and scarcely rising belly reject Ken Russell's cheerful and colourful pantomime of the artist as a happy clownish extrovert.

The cinema has ill served the artist by turning all the long hours at the easels into a few seconds of filmic creations. So with Vincent Minelli's film of Van Gogh, so too with Russell's *Savage Messiah*. Yet one cannot protest but only sigh, for the film was made to amuse a mass audience and it can take its place alongside *The Devils* and *The Music Lovers*. The film belongs to Dorothy Tutin for we can believe that this was Gaudier-Brzeska's friend and companion who lived out her sad, mad life after her young lover was killed in battle in 1915.

Throughout the film Dorothy Tutin gives a controlled performance of a woman under daily stress, and her final collapse, outside the scope of this film, must follow on with an awful logic

for myself I can but regret the film that was never made. This was the world of Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, Augustus John, John Middleton Murry and cheap meals at the Cafe Royal, yet Russell gives us nothing beyond a few music-hall caricatures of these people, and for reasons known only to God and Russell a night club scene named, for the well read, as the Vortex.

MANY FAULTS

There are many faults within this film. It is badly written, badly cast, with scenes that are no more than stage sets, especially with the Putney basement, for Russell lacks Ford or Hitchcock's use of the long shot to give his filmed drama a tragic universality, but it is a good attempt, and the Archivists of

the Greater London Council should be paid and made to attend its showing. Russell, and all praise to the man, hired the poet Christopher Logue to write the script, and it is an honourable failure.

Logue has written many a long lyrical poem, and like Browning mocked the world and its evils in blank verse and broken line, but there is a flaw in Logue's talent that like a fart in a church or a hymn in a whorehouse, halts the well wishers. As within this film, one pays attention to Logue's dialogue, despite the visual. An unnecessary obscenity, a crude phrase or a too tailored *moi* that is merely a refashioned cliché marks the flaw in Logue's talent the stain upon the flawless marble, for this film belongs to the actress Dorothy Tutin and the poet Christopher Logue, and it is their homage to the master Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who died in battle at one in the afternoon on June 5, 1915, during an attack on Neuville St Vaast.

ARTHUR MOYSE

There is no End

NOW AND AGAIN a slight feeling of bookphobia overtakes me, it is not just an occupational disease but the serried ranks of books that pour from the publishers like the output of a sorcerer's apprentice give me spasms. Of books, and of books about books, there is no end—short of deliberate illiteracy.

This review about a 'book' about books is of *Pacifism: a selected bibliography* compiled by John Hyatt and published by Housmans at 25p. It is, in fact, a 54pp. pamphlet. One's first impulse is to ask who wants such a pamphlet? The general reader (God bless him/her!) does not need such a guide.

The student doing a thesis on the subject does not seem to be sufficient of a public; he will, in any case, simply badger the organizations concerned (perhaps PN or the PPU have such a market in mind). Next, there is the collector or bibliomaniac who will use this as his score sheet and badger his bookseller, who will badger the *Chaque* with this formidable, and not entirely complete list. There are, of course, the reprint houses but one knows that an American publishing house has embarked on a massive programme of reprinting photographically the Great Masterpieces of Peace.

Since many of the books are out of print and really scarce—John Hyatt would have done everyone a service by putting the simple letters 'op' for out of print after—alas!—many of the titles.

Whilst I am on about this, I will fall gracefully into the common reviewers' trap of attacking a book for not being what it never set out to be. As a bibliography it fails again by not describing the number of pages. I know many of these works to be pamphlets and it would save the time of booksellers and librarians if they knew this awful fact—pamphlets are often very important material neglected by libraries and most booksellers—Freedom Press and Housman's excepted. (As for second-hand pamphlets, they're either given away or fetch the earth!)

Secondly I think there should be a section classifying the renegade 'pacifists'. It does the writer very little service (and the reader too!) to believe that the writer held to these views. One might even list pamphlets or books in which the writer expressed contrary views. The prime example which springs to mind is Beverly Nichols, his good hawk-work (when we were all pacifists) *Cry Havoc*, rendered for popular consumption the facts of the Bloody Traffic and is listed by Hyatt, his pamphlet 'In the Next War I shall be a Conscientious Objector'

is not—fortunately. But his apology *Men do not Weep* (one essay-chapter) is also lacking even in the 'Pacifism's Critics' section. This section also lacks the very important C. Day Lewis (Left Review) reply to Huxley *We Are Not Going To Do Nothing*.

In flipping through—who reads bibliographies?—one notes the absence of John Hayland's *How Christ Met Aggression*. Hayland's could be covered in April but this could be covered in April. Carter's bibliography on Non-Violence. Dwight MacDonald's *Root Is Man* is listed only in the Indore, India edition, and not in the various amended and revised editions since; even MacDonald has revised some of his views! Randolph Bourne's *The State* seems not to be listed although his other works are. There are a lot of books on my mind published by the Peace Book Club before the war, by H. M. Swanwick and L. P. Jacks for example, which might have been included.

Finally while I'm still carping, why not list novels dealing with pacifists? They should be worthy of a section from FITZROY's *Despised and Rejected*, via HUXLEY's *Eyeless in Giza* to J. E. B. STUART's *The Objector*. They have something to contribute to the serious student of pacifism.

'Pacifism' is still a fighting word in the anarchist movement, therefore any serious study of it is to be welcomed. If John Hyatt's bibliography helps towards this it is welcome.

J.R.

A Fistful of Dynamite


THIS FILM is the documentary type report of the 'revolutionary' activities of a Mexican bandit who becomes a leader of a guerrilla army in the Mexican revolution, and an IRA man. The action takes place around the high point of the revolution with the *Zapatistas* about to enter Mexico City and the *Villistas* growing in the northern provinces. This would be late 1914 and therefore the existence of the IRA man is historically incorrect.

What is more disturbing, however, is the equation of revolution merely with military victory. The causes of the revolution, land redistribution and feudalism, don't gain mention at all, instead we have ambushes, raids and attacks on trains. Indeed, in the most interesting scene, for revolutionaries at the Mexican attacks his Irish comrade for his detached, scholastic method of revolution and his constant book study saying that such things don't prevent the poor from dying. The Irishman considers and then throws his book into a puddle, incidentally the book is one by M. A. Bakunin.

This is perhaps characteristic of the film as a whole. Ideas are not presented except to back up the scripwriters' concept of revolution as being no more than a *coup d'état* of the poor over the rich. There is however one part that gives us some satisfaction. The Mexican bandit initially concerns himself only with robbery. The Irishman uses this to fool him into raiding the bank in Mesa Verde which had been turned into a political prison. This 'brave act' of course turns the Mexican into a people's hero! From then on circumstances force the Mexican into the role of a revolutionary leader rated as highly as Villa and Zapata. The climax comes when the military government send one final punitive mission, the train is blown up, the forces shot down, but the Irishman is shot down with them and in the fire that follows his stock of explosives that he carries inside his coat blows up.

An interesting film of what revolution is not.

D.B.



Secretary:
Peter Le Mare, 5 Hannaford Road,
Rotton Park, Birmingham 16

ANARCHIST FEDERATION of BRITAIN

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LEICESTERSHIRE. The Black Flag Bookshop, 1 Wile Street, Leicester.

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KENT. Brian Richardson (phone Knockholt 2716).

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Please notify us if entries in these columns need amending.

'Nothing but Quotes'

QUOTATIONS FROM THE ANARCHISTS. Edited by Paul Berman. Praeger, \$2.45.

HERE IS YET ANOTHER American paperback anthology of anarchist writings, but this time on a rather different pattern from Horowitz, Krimerman and Perry, Hoffman, and Shatz. Instead of a small number of long passages, it contains a large number of short passages—rather like *Quotations from Chairman Mao*. The closest parallel is in fact a French anthology edited by Bernard Thomas and published in 1969 under the unfortunate title *Ni dieu ni maître* (unfortunate because it was of course the same title of Daniel Guérin's massive and magnificent anthology of 1965). Thomas's book was a cheap paperback containing hundreds of brief quotations, mainly from the classic anarchist writers, rather carelessly arranged by subject, with a good preface, a chronology, and a bad bibliography. Berman's book is a relatively cheap paperback containing hundreds of brief quotations, mainly from some of the classic anarchist writers, rather carelessly arranged by subject, with a poor preface, a few biographical notes, and a summary bibliography.

The main problems of any anthology are what it includes and excludes, and what purpose it serves. Berman says: 'The only Anarchists included are socialists—more properly, either Anarchist Communists or Anarcho-Syndicalists' (with the addition of Proudhon). He has excluded all the individualists, 'because they were not explicit socialists', and also all Christians and pacifists—which means the omission of Godwin, Stirner, Tolstoy, and many other figures of great importance in the origin and development of the anarchist ideology. The writers represented most frequently are Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Berkman, Goldman, and Roeder, in that order. The passages quoted date from between 1840 and 1938.

Almost all the material in the book is already available in English, though some has been translated from French. Berman seems to know no other languages, and as a result his coverage of—say—Russian and Spanish writers is weak; nor is it helped by such elementary slips as calling Makhno's followers 'Makhnovists' rather than *Makhnovists* or remarking that 'there are no works in English devoted exclusively to Spanish Anarchism'. So this book doesn't offer much that is new; the question is whether it offers it in a useful form.

A collection of quotations from this group of anarchist writers certainly gives an impression of their ideas in a fairly painless way, but it isn't certain that this is the best way of doing so. We are given only a sentence or two at a time, followed by the name of the author and work, with a date (frequently incorrect). What we get is not so much anarchist thought as various anarchist thoughts, with no supporting argument, no linking commentary, no explanatory notes, no proper context, no attempt to place them in history or philosophy or anything else.

Perhaps there is something here for

readers who know virtually nothing about anarchism and want to find out something quickly about its socialist variety. It is difficult to see what else there is—there is certainly nothing for serious students of the subject—except possibly a kind of source-book for striking aphorisms like those which used to appear on the front page of *FREEDOM* every week. For all their faults, the existing American anthologies really perform a more useful function; and there is still no substitute in English for Guérin's *Ni dieu ni maître*.

N.W.

Down Again! PRESS FUND

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TO MAKE SIMPLE analogies with the past can be a futile and dangerous practice but it really does seem that history repeats itself. Marxist groups in the Bolshevik tradition have, like their ancestor, Lenin, been forced by the level of spontaneous industrial and community militancy—the antithesis of sterile party-building—to effect a facade which anarchists might sometimes be tempted to look upon sympathetically. Workers' control and workers' councils have been seized upon with opportunistic glee.

In 1917 many Russian anarchists were convinced by Lenin's *April Theses* and his *State and Revolution* that he had miraculously made a great leap in their direction. Yet subsequent events were to show that vaguely expressed libertarian sentiments were no guarantee against the construction of a ruthless, centralized party, which eventually crushed the implacable foe and the sympathetic critic without distinction. The left-wing Bolsheviks who had acceded to the suppression of the anarchist 'bandits' were soon afterwards to suffer the irony of a similar fate.

We know good revolutionaries who accept the anarchist critique of centralism and bureaucracy and yet they continue to work within organisations with the expressed objective of creating a centralized party in search of power! To such comrades we cannot say too strongly that authority, centralism and bureaucracy within the revolutionary movement must be destroyed NOW. It is not an academic debate to be postponed until after the Revolution because if bureaucracy and the power of leaders are not destroyed now then they will destroy us, and our hopes for the future, on the morning of their *coup d'état*.

However, there is a simple acid-test which clearly divides the power-seekers from those who wish to see a free society created by the initiative and active participation of the people concerned. Anarchists believe that people everywhere—whether workers in Britain or peasants in Vietnam—could create a free world where people really would have control of their own lives tomorrow if they resolved to have no more of leaders and governments. Our efforts by word and

BE REALISTIC!

deed are dedicated to convincing our fellow-workers of that simple fact, and we do not believe that they are too stupid to comprehend it. We are not looking for followers, pawns to be used in our games, so we are not interested in conning workers with empty slogans, or flattering them when we believe they deserve criticism.

Two readers' letters recently criticised the position taken by FREEDOM over Vietnam and the recent docks dispute. In an orgy of opportunism one reader urged us to 'swim with the tide of workers' movements from Vietnam to dockland'. What this reader failed to recognise was that in the two instances quoted the best interests of working people were not being served, and this is why FREEDOM refused to join the bandwagon of mindless militants and pseudo-revolutionaries.

A victory for the NLF in Vietnam will not bring freedom to the peasants in Vietnam. The 'national liberators' will form a new government, a new tyranny over the people. Like all politicians everywhere they inflict every suffering on the people in the name of the struggle for 'freedom' whilst they plan the ways they will regulate the lives of the people when they take over from the old rulers. The label 'guerrilla army' is no guarantee of revolutionary good faith. Yesterday's guerrilla is today's dictator in so many parts of the world. There is no iron law of history which demands that a colonial people must endure the dictatorship of nationalist rulers on the way to their own liberation. Furthermore, there is no reason whatsoever to believe that a nationalist government is a step towards that liberation. By perpetuating the myths about 'national liberation struggles' people who claim to be internationalists confuse workers by suggesting that there is a nationalist solution to the problems of the people. Whether in Vietnam, Ireland or Britain there is a common

enemy: government and authority.

The action of the dockers in the docks dispute underlined everything that is wrong in the trade union movement. Instead of uniting with container-workers to further their common interest the dockers turned on their fellow-workers. Such divisive action weakens the working-class movement and strengthens the hand of the employers and the State. Undoubtedly, great differentials in wages are the greatest enemies of solidarity and should be discouraged by anarchists within their own unions. Militancy and direct action are not automatically revolutionary and they are, in fact, reactionary if they destroy the freedom and solidarity on which a new society could be built.

It was one of those unfortunate twists of history that the first time solidarity action was needed in support of workers imprisoned under the Industrial Relations Act the workers involved had been involved in action which inevitably tended to destroy that solidarity. Fortunately, on this occasion, working-class solidarity was strong enough to stand

the strain and it forced the release of the imprisoned men. However, the sight of dockers' delegates being violently attacked by militants of dubious origin further alienated many workers. Anarchists demand the right of a dissenting minority to make their own decisions and to act accordingly in the way of unofficial action, etc., but it is the tactic of the fascist thug to use violence against fellow-workers in a vain attempt to achieve a 'democratic' majority. Revolutionary ends cannot be separated from means: freedom of action is the only basis for creating genuine solidarity.

FREEDOM will continue to advocate the building of Utopia now because it is a realistic possibility here and now. We are all men and women with free minds capable of changing the world and building a better life; we are not the slaves of mythical historical processes, doomed to the fatalistic acceptance of the suffering and injustice of humanity. We will have a struggle to throw off all the rulers and exploiters but the important step is to have done with the dirty game of politics and the common ever eager to set themselves up as leaders. A slogan which appeared on the walls in Paris during the revolutionary days of May 1968 states the position clearly: Be realistic—demand the impossible!

TERRY PHILLIPS.

Rent Tribunals

HOW STUPIDLY LAZY we all are. Here I was in a cosy cottage-slum paying four pounds a week and seemingly quite happy to pay it. For it seems most people take no action until they are driven through desperation or absolute need. Also although a person may be able to read and write it doesn't necessarily mean he can fight with words and pen. Then again it causes unpleasantness. Few people want to upset others unless it is absolutely necessary in order to obtain one's rights—a fair rent; or a deservedly cheaper rent—or a stay-of-eviction! But unless some action is taken then it only causes the feeling that it is not worth ever approaching rent tribunals.

However what must be done is simple: in my own case, having received notice to quit, I got in touch with the local Rent Officer. From him I received the forms to fill in for a Tribunal (Rent Tribunal). After filling in the form for Furnished Lettings (Rent Act, Part VI, 1968) stating what furniture was the landlady's and what was mine; adding comments as to the nature of the cottage; being without drains; water and gas but having electricity; stating that no rent book existed for first 18 months of nearly four years' living there (called optimistically 'Six Chimneys' but having only two; being able to see six mice, engine-house chimneys down the Troon to Carn Kie valley) and explaining that the furniture provided cost a total of perhaps just £25 and could in no way be considered sufficient to call it a 'furnished letting'... the three members of the tribunal, a solicitor chairman; a trade unionist; and a conservative hat-wearing lady-like personage, plus the council officer recording evidence, took note, heard the landlady's evidence, then considered the case in private; having earlier that day been up to the cottage to check that what was stated on the tribunal form by landlady and tenant was in fact so.

The tribunal came to the conclusion that they could not make any statement on the 'fair rent' or time to quit since they found the cottage to be outside their jurisdiction... declaring in other words the cottage to be inadequately furnished—to be an unfurnished tenancy, with six months' notice before eviction can take place.

This can be challenged by the landlady through a county court but would of course cost money and she would be unlikely to win in this case.

So take heart and defend yourself whenever possible. I went into the local library and read up on the 1968 act. Made notes and tried to understand as much of it as possible. You can do the same for any such legal affairs. To pay solicitors is a business racket and too costly in every way, since win or lose, morally right or wrong, they couldn't give a shit to put it simply. All the best with your court cases.

DENNIS GOULD.

The New Bigotry

LETTER

Dear Comrades,

John Brent writes a plain misstatement of fact in FREEDOM (9.9.72 'The New Bigotry'). He writes, 'Jensen believes that Negroes are innately inferior to whites...'. This is a lie about Jensen, and it is worthwhile to nail lies about people wherever they are published. Obviously reactionary and racist papers would like to pretend that this is what Jensen and other men of similar scientific eminence have claimed, but the scientists have not claimed that Negroes are 'inferior'. It is a pity that lies of this kind should be retailed in an anarchist paper.

If anyone is interested in what Jensen did say, they should study Jensen. As far as I have read his writings they seem to me eminently sound. By careful research and sensible theorizing he has made a valuable contribution to knowledge. In contrast, John Brent's dogmatic statements are largely unfounded and dogmatic, and his views appear to be both snobbish and sexist. He writes, '... most men and nearly all women are profoundly reactionary in their feelings'. What bloody nonsense is this? 'The New Bigotry' seems a fitting title for this hodge-podge of the prejudices of an elitist snob.

TONY GIBSON.

John Brent replies: Source of information. *Guardian*, 20.9.72. This paper seems to have taken quite a fancy to the man. People seem to me to be reactionary because of what they are taught. It is not innate, and not their fault, but sexist, elitist or not, I rarely meet people who are not reactionary. Male anarchists outnumber female by a large majority. I think this is due to the roles society imposes on people and trains them to submit to. As far as the media are concerned, I have decided to give up both the *Guardian* and *New Statesman*, who seem to be using racism as means of increasing circulation, and if Tony Gibson is correct are not too squeamish about lying.

RENT

Continued from page 1

another, instead of rejecting the Bill completely!

The primary concern with acting in a Parliamentary manner and doing nothing illegal—or anything which will affect the Councilors or MPs personally—is an abhorrent concept. Has it been forgotten that George Lansbury, when he was a Poplar councillor, went to jail on just such a principle as a conflict with the Central Government on the poor law? And did not the councillors of St. Pancras suffer financially for a similar principle? It may be claimed that the working class are less led by donkeys, but to accept leadership is proof of lack of family qualities. What of the

rent strike? Must the tenants always depend on the broken reeds of morally bankrupt Labour councillors giving a lead? As if one were a dog!

The primary insult of the Housing Finance Bill is the degradation of having to go cap in hand as it were, to ask the Authorities for a rebate. It is quite obvious, as with much social services, that many are too proud to claim what is theirs by right, but which has been elevated to the status of a favour. Short of telling them what they can do with their Rebate, the only thing is to refuse to pay the increase on the grounds that you're not getting a rebate.

JACK ROBINSON

ST. IMIER— a Century has passed

IN WRITING of the first Congress of the 'Black International' formed by the anti-authoritarian socialists in 1872, Bakunin neglected to inform his readers on the state of the weather. Which probably accounts for the optimism that the organisers of the recent reunion felt in billing it as a century picnic: it was bucketting down in the Swiss Jura mountains as almost two hundred people of varying nationalities gathered near St. Imier's tiny square, now used as a car park. Amongst them were Swiss, Italian, German, French, Austrian, Japanese, Australian and American comrades, with myself as the sole representative of British anarchism.

We retired to a dead posh hotel, where we crammed ourselves into a first-floor restaurant, having mounted a staircase that was so plushly carpeted as to make me consider the fact that our comrades of 1872 would marvel to see us! In the restaurant some of the younger comrades braved the hard floor to 'picnic', whilst those with more money partook of an expensive meal with lots of booze.

All the old grandpas were there or so it seemed, taking advantage of their seniority in years to deliver long winded accounts of the anarchist movement of the last century, doubtless from the first hand. Most of the speeches were in Italian, which left me wondering as I sat in the middle of the floor.

There are a few more and a few more eager to see the back home, together to exchange ideas and experiences, to

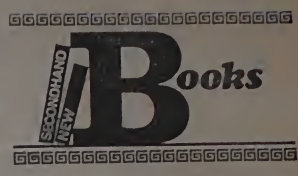
my halting French, I did my best to explain that there were still anarchists in Britain and that some of us were kicking. A plea for action seemed to go in scores of ears and come out the other side, but did receive some replies; so if there is anyone in this Isle who wishes to make contact with our comrades on other continents, please get in touch with me via Freedom Press.

At one point we were treated to some revolutionary Spanish songs, complete with accompaniment on a Spanish guitar, which was followed by a multi-lingual rendering of the 'Internationale', twice. A Japanese comrade started speaking in French but finding the strain too hard broke into Japanese amid a round of applause and bemused laughter. But we got the message.

After everyone who had something to say had said it with more besides, some made a pilgrimage to 'L'Auberge de la Clef', where lived Bakunin whilst he was amongst the watchmakers of the Jura Federation. Photographs were solemnly taken, especially by some Italians who lined up the entire family from Grandpas down to the littlest, in a way reminiscent of a Catholic ritual. Doubtless the photo will be framed and on the side-board for all to see along with a bit of Bakunin's hair.

At the Pavillion, the Jews say, 'Next year in Jerusalem'. Well, here's the next centenary in St. Imier, in the first Commune of St. Imier!

ROBERT MARGOLIS



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